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National Black HIV/ AIDS Awareness Day

City of Milwaukee Health Department Joins Community Partners to Increase HIV/AIDS Awareness

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) in partnership with UMOS and the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center will provide free and confidential HIV and sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing to recognize National Black HIV/ AIDS Awareness Day.

The event will be held Monday, February 9 at UMOS-Central Job Center, located at 4030 N. 29th Street from 10 am - 2 pm.

HIV and AIDS are serious problems in Wisconsin and Milwaukee. Since 1983, more than 10,200 people in Wisconsin have been diagnosed with HIV infection and more than 3,680 have died. Currently, the state has reached an all-time high with more than 6,500 people estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in Wisconsin. More than 50% of the reported cases of HIV/AIDS in the state are in Milwaukee.

Of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, HIV and AIDS has affected African Americans the most. And HIV rates for Hispanics are also higher than for whites. However, HIV/AIDS can affect anyone of any race or ethnicity.

“It is important that everyone get tested so that they know their HIV status,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “We also encourage residents to not engage in risky behaviors such as having more than one sex partner and not using condoms.”

Even though African Americans account for about 13% of the U.S. population, blacks account for about half (49%) of the people who get HIV and AIDS. In addition, Blacks with AIDS tend to die sooner and more often than other races and ethnic groups with AIDS). These disparities are also problems here in Southeastern Wisconsin, where the majority of HIV/AIDS cases are identified in African Americans.

There is still no vaccine and still no cure for HIV/AIDS. Thus, it is crucial that people know their HIV status. People who know they are HIV positive can reduce risky behavior, which reduces transmission to others. In addition, the sooner that patients are diagnosed, the sooner they can receive treatment, which in turn reduces hospitalizations, and improves both longevity and quality of life.

In addition to HIV testing, the City of Milwaukee Health Department offers screening for sexually transmitted infections (STDs), HIV counseling, medical case management for women living with HIV, presentations to community groups, and participation in health fairs.

All services are available on a walk-in basis at Keenan Central Health Center at 3200 North 36th Street. For more information on HIV or STD testing call 286-3631.